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Reply to: **Tampa, FL**

Tuesday - April 8, 2002

**U.S. COAST GUARD INTERDICTION NETS MORE THAN  
ONE TON OF COCAINE AND FOUR DEFENDANTS**

U.S. Attorney Paul I. Perez announced the two count indictment today of four individuals who had been taken into custody by the U.S. Coast Guard on April 5, 2002 in the Carribean Ocean. Count one charges them with conspiracy to distribute more than 5 kilograms of cocaine while on board a vessel subject to the jurisdiction of the United States and count two charges possession with intent to distribute five kilograms or more of cocaine while aboard a vessel subject to U.S. jurisdiction. The four Colombians charged are: Winford Taylor-Walton (DOB 8/23/69), Avelino Hodgson (DOB 11/23/73), Rodolfo Gordon (DOB 11/17/47), Jorge Brockman (DOB 1/6/70).

The U.S. Coast Guard brought the detainees and almost one and a-half tons of cocaine to the Coast Guard Station in St. Petersburg this morning. On April 5, 2002 the Coast Guard Cutter "Mohawk" was on patrol in the Carribean Ocean approximately 200 miles north of Colombia in international waters when it spotted a "go fast" vessel. A helicopter and smaller boat were dispatched from the "Mohawk" and they began pursuit of the "go fast". The "go fast" would not stop and eventually warning shots were fired. The vessel continued to evade the Coast Guard pursuit team until gunfire was directed at the engine which then disabled the vessel's motor.

This brings the number of people indicted in the last week alone to 20 and approximately four tons of cocaine seized in three separate interdictions. Mr. Perez stated: “The U.S. Coast Guard has been a tremendous partner in this effort to stop the flow of illegal drugs into our country. This latest case in “Operation Panama Express” brings the total amount of cocaine interdicted before it reached our nation to more than 125 tons in the past two years.”

In addition to the U. S. Coast Guard participating in this joint investigation, the following agencies are involved: The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), U.S. Customs Service, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the U.S. Marshals Service. This case will be prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Walter Furr of the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force for the Middle District of Florida.

An indictment is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed a violation of the federal criminal laws, and every defendant is presumed innocent unless, and until, proven guilty.